

## B i t e s i z e

 Early childhood workforce development topped the list of priorities among stakeholders responding to a survey on what they hope to get from the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department. In the survey distributed by the New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership, respondents listed operational efficiency as their second highest priority. Most of those responding work in early childhood.

 The 11th Judicial District judge overseeing the *Zuñi* lawsuit challenging the state's system for funding public school construction is expected to issue a decision in mid-August. Lawyers for the state and the plaintiffs – the Zuni and Gallup-McKinley County public school boards – concluded three days of testimony earlier this month. The Legislature during the session appropriated \$34 million specifically for capital outlay in school districts that receive Impact Aid for tribal lands, like the plaintiffs.

 Colleges of education at Highlands University, New Mexico State University, Eastern New Mexico University, and the University of New Mexico are offering summer Spanish immersion programs for those seeking the teaching license endorsement for bilingual education. The 2018 *Teacher Vacancy Report* notes 40 vacancies in jobs requiring the bilingual endorsement or the endorsement for TESOL, teaching English to speakers of other languages.



# i n f o r m E D

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Representative Christine Trujillo, Chair / Senator Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / May 2019

### From the Chairwoman

#### New Horizon

Things are looking up for New Mexico public schools. Way up.

Propelled by the court ruling that found New Mexico is not providing an adequate education to its children and enabled by strong state revenues, legislators during the session earlier this year made progress on improving services for at-risk students by nearly doubling the funding factor for at-risk students, although we can do more. Lawmakers also significantly increased the minimum salaries for teachers and gave every public education employee a raise, funded new extended learning time programs, and invested in career and technical education and multicultural education, because not all students are the same.

And for the first time in a while, most of the major players are on the same page. The Legislature and the governor share a commitment and a vision for a strong future for our schools based on key investments in workforce and classroom supports and a comprehensive, inclusive approach. While there are still some concerns about the potential of the court to micromanage the state's public schools, the new administration and legislators largely agree with the plaintiffs on the source of the problems and potential solutions.

As a leading voice in public education policy in New Mexico, the Legislative Education Study Committee will focus in the coming years on capitalizing on those common commitments and common approaches. While still mindful the Legislature is a separate branch of government, we will work closely with the governor and the state agencies responsible for education and early childhood, as well as all engaged education stakeholders in the state. We will closely follow the effectiveness of the newly funded initiatives and recommend additional changes as needed.

We will closely examine the impact of change on our children, especially the most vulnerable, to ensure their future, and the future of New Mexico, is bright.

We look forward to this new chapter in New Mexico's public schools.

Representative Christine Trujillo

## Adequacy Lawsuit Drives School Reforms

The appropriation for public schools will grow by about a half-billion dollars in FY20, a 16 percent increase driven largely by a district court finding that New Mexico schools are inadequate.

New Mexico legislators during the session earlier this year passed an education reform package that included statutory changes and funding to nearly double spending on students at risk of failing because of low income, transience, or limited English proficiency; expand access and funding for the K-5 Plus extended school-year program; expand multicultural and bilingual education; and improve the recruitment and retention of teachers, including through better pay – all reactions to issues raised by the plaintiffs and endorsed by the judge in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit.

While most reform was driven by the consolidated lawsuit – initially two separate suits that argued the state was not meeting the education standard set in the state constitution – changes included additional investment in career and technical education and revamps of the teacher, school, and student assessment systems, reforms not specifically

referenced in the suit but intended to improve student success.

Specifically, legislators adopted changes to the public school funding formula that will

- Increase the multiplier used to calculate the at-risk index from 0.13 to 0.25 to provide additional funding for at-risk students;
- Allow any school district or charter school seeking to participate in the new extended learning program or until-now-limited K-5 Plus program to receive funding through the formula;
- Eliminate a funding boost for small schools within larger school districts and create a new factor for districts and charter schools in rural areas;
- Add \$7 million to expand bilingual and multicultural education funded through the formula.

Additional changes will

- Add \$3.5 million to the Indian education fund;
- Raise the minimum teacher salaries by \$5,000 for level 1 teachers and \$6,000 for level 2 and level 3-A teachers, 3-A counselors, tie the minimum salary for principals and assistant principals to the minimum

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# Priorities Include Teacher Recruitment, Retention

Two of the three cabinet secretaries scheduled to talk to the committee in May plan to discuss teacher education, recruitment, and retention, among other topics, staff reports say.

Brian Blalock, secretary of the Children, Youth and Families Department, and Karen Trujillo, Ph.D., secretary of the Public Education Department, are scheduled to appear before the committee on May 29, with Blalock at 10:30 a.m. and Trujillo at 1 p.m. Kate O'Neill, higher education secretary, is scheduled to speak at 9 a.m. on May 30.

In discussions with LESC staff in preparation for the first committee meeting of the interim, Blalock indicated he will discuss early childhood services as part of a general discussion on all four major CYFD programs. However, he will focus on protective services, juvenile justice, and behavioral health because early childhood services are moving to the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department.

## Suit Prompts Reforms

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for 3-A teachers, and raise all school employees pay by at least 6 percent;

- Add \$2 million to the Public Education Department operating budget to improve oversight;
- Appropriate \$30 million in recurring revenue and \$26.5 million in nonrecurring revenue for instructional materials, including “sufficient funds” for culturally relevant materials;
- Increase funding for transportation by 14 percent;
- Establish and provide \$5 million in initial funding for a seven-year pilot project for career and technical education.

LESC intends to hold a hearing on the new department later this year.

Blalock told LESC staff he will discuss a new risk assessment tool for children who come to the attention of protection services, as well as two new pilots to assess and prevent “adverse childhood experiences” and assess child and adolescent needs.

Trujillo indicates PED’s priorities for the interim are promoting teacher preparation and retention and improving student engagement and achievement.

The department is collaborating with the deans and directors of New Mexico colleges of education to elevate teaching as a profession and improve teacher readiness, supports, and professional development, Trujillo told staff.

Teacher compensation will also be a priority for Trujillo, and PED has

assembled a task force of local school officials and national experts to rethink how teachers are assessed, along with a task force to review student assessments, staff says.

In addition, PED will closely monitor the implementation of K-5 Plus and extended learning time programs and has begun work on an expansion of prekindergarten that will maintain quality. Community schools and career and technical education are also on the department’s agenda, staff reports.

O'Neill plans on speaking about the role of higher education in the education pipeline – including teacher education, mentorship of new teachers, and in-classroom experience – and pipeline barriers. She also plans to discuss high-demand teacher jobs and recruitment and retention of teachers and other faculty.

## Early Childhood Care, Services Uneven

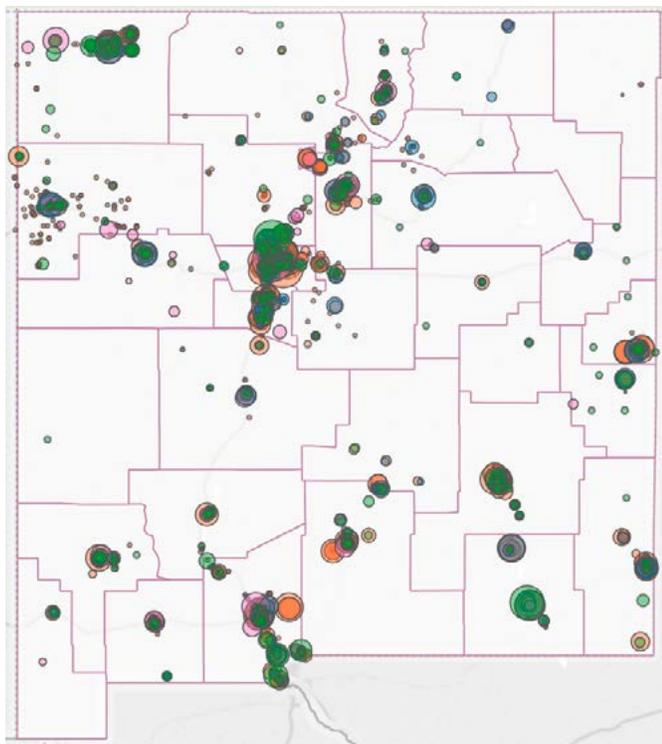
While the need for early childhood services is being met in some areas of the state, large swaths have no services at all.

The Cradle to Career Policy Institute at the University of New Mexico has developed an [interactive map](#) that allows users to see the availability of services throughout the state, by type and region.

The map includes a visualization of whether

the need is being met for specific services in different counties.

While services are more dense in urban areas, a low density of services does not necessarily correlate with unmet need. While 0 percent of the need for childcare is being met in Catron County, 99 percent of the need is being met in nearby, also rural, Hidalgo County.



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